

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 13, and add new claims 15 and 16 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A cellular communications network comprising:

a plurality of ~~gateways~~ controllers for controlling cells in the cellular communications network, the ~~gateways~~ controllers being arranged to receive RF information from at least one mobile station in the network, at least one gatekeeper connected to said ~~gateways~~ controllers by a switched packet communication path, wherein each ~~gateway~~ controller includes means for generating a handover required indication for a call in which the ~~gateway~~ controller is engaged and packet generating means for generating a packet addressed to said gatekeeper and including control information comprising a candidate list of alternative cells to which the call could possibly be transferred and wherein the gatekeeper includes selection means for selecting one of said alternative cells in said candidate list and packet generating means for generating a packet for sending a handover request for handing over the call to said one of said alternative cells.

2. (Currently Amended) A network according to claim 1, wherein said ~~gateways~~ controllers are under the common control of said at least one gatekeeper to define a network zone within which handoff is to be effected, wherein the packet generated by said gatekeeper is addressed to one of said ~~gateways~~ controllers in said zone.

3. (Original) A network according to claim 1, which is an internal cellular communications network and which comprises an interface for connection to an external network which includes an external controller, wherein the packet generated by said gatekeeper is addressed to said external controller.

4. (Currently Amended) A network according to claim 1, wherein data defining network specific resources is held at each ~~gateway~~ controller.

5. (Original) A network according to claim 4, wherein said data defining network specific resources defines GSM specific end system information.

6. (Currently Amended) A network according to claim 1, which comprises a plurality of gatekeepers each controlling a set of said ~~gateways~~ controllers defining individual network zones, wherein a handoff request is to be effected between said zones, the packet generated by said at least one gatekeeper being addressed to at least one other gatekeeper in the network.

7. (Original) A network according to claim 6, wherein one of said gatekeepers is defined as an anchor gatekeeper through which all handoff requests are routed.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of effecting handoff of a call in which at least one mobile station is engaged in a cellular communications network comprising a plurality of cells, the method comprising:

receiving from said mobile station a handoff required indication indicating that handover is needed from a source gateway controller to a target gateway controller;

formulating at the source gateway controller a packet addressed to a source gatekeeper, said packet including control information comprising a candidate list identifying possible alternative gateways controllers; and

at the source gatekeeper, determining to which one of said target gateways controllers within said candidate list a handoff request should be forwarded and formulating a packet for forwarding to said target gateway controller.

9. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 8, wherein the target gateway controller is in the same network zone as the source gateway controller and wherein the packet generated by the source gatekeeper is addressed to said target gateway controller.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein handover is to be effected to an external network having an external controller, wherein the packet generated by the gatekeeper is addressed to an interface unit for said external network.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein handover is to be effected between two network zones, each having a respective gatekeeper and wherein the packet generated by the source gatekeeper is addressed to a target gatekeeper identified from the candidate list.

12. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 8, wherein the source gatekeeper is defined as an anchor gatekeeper, and all handover requests are routed through said anchor gatekeeper.

13. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 8, wherein the candidate list comprises local area codes and cell identifiers from which possible alternative target ~~gateways~~ controllers can be resolved.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein handover is to be effected from an external network having an external controller, wherein the gatekeeper is arranged to receive a packet from an interface unit from said external network.

15. (New) A controller for a cellular communications network comprising:
means for generating a handover required indication for a call in which the controller is engaged; and
packet generating means for generating a packet addressed to a gatekeeper;

the packet generating means being configured to include in the packet a candidate list of alternative cells to which the call could possibly be transferred.

16. (New) A gatekeeper for a cellular communications network comprising:

means for receiving a packet comprising a candidate list of alternative cells to which a call could possibly be transferred; and

means for generating a packet for sending a handover request for handling over a call to one of the alternative cells indicated in a received packet comprising a candidate list of alternative cells to which the call could possibly be transferred.